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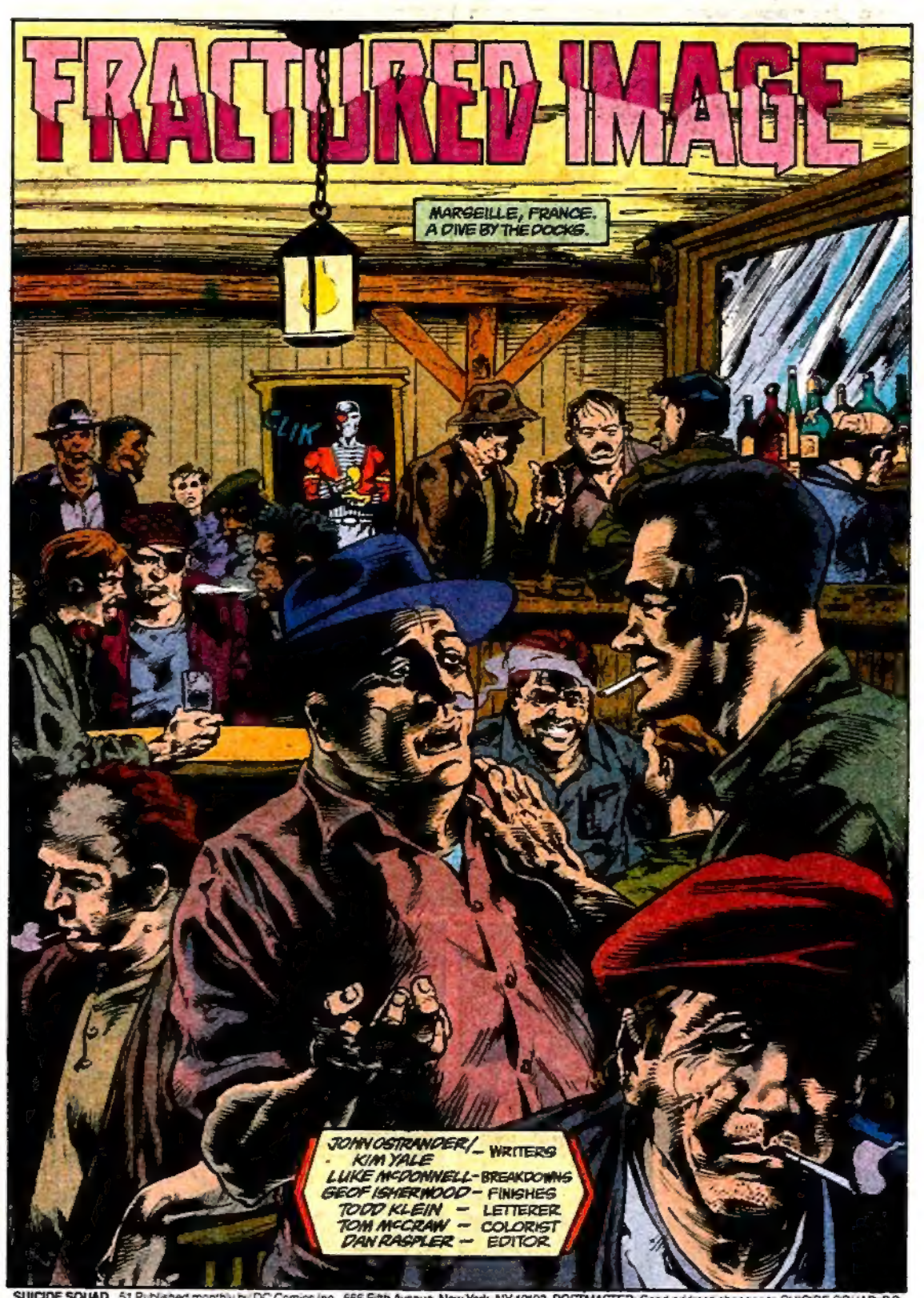

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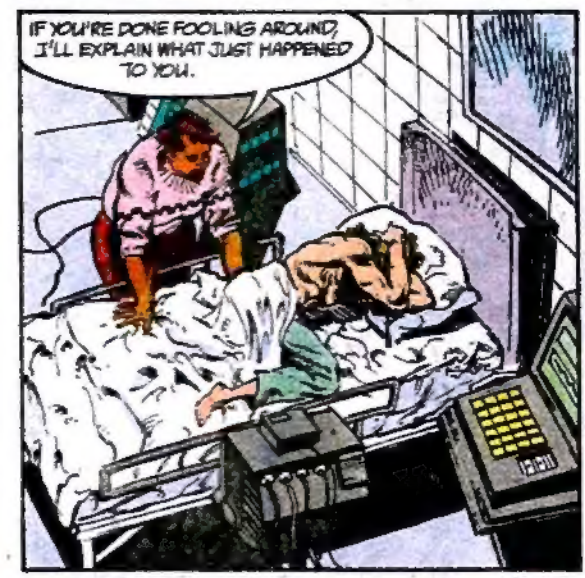
<LOOK AT THIS, MARC!>
<EH? WHO IS THIS MORON?>
<WHAT MASQUERADE ARE YOU MADE UP FOR?>
<I AM DEADSHOT.>
<I AM YOUR DEATH.>
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM!
<LOOK OUT!>
<BASTARD!>
<SHOOT! SHOOT HIM DOWN!>
BDOW BLAM!
PIIING!
BLAM BLAM!

HA HA HA HA!

THE INSTITUTE FOR META-HUMAN STUDIES, JUST OUTSIDE PITTSBURGH--
C'MON, CARMICHAEL-- OPEN THOSE BEADY LITTLE EYES. MONITORS ALL SAY YOU'RE AWAKE. STOP PLAYING POSSUM.

NO, I THINK IT'S TIME WE START PLAYING GAMES, MRS. WALLER.
LET'S START WITH YOU SLICING YOUR OWN THROAT, SHALL WE?

GARILEEE!


IF YOU'RE DONE FOOLING AROUND, I'LL EXPLAIN WHAT JUST HAPPENED TO YOU.

WE'VE INTRODUCED NEW PROGRAMS TO THOSE CHIPS YOU HAD INSERTED INTO YOUR BRAIN. NOW WHEN YOU TRY TO TAKE OVER ANOTHER PERSON'S SKULL, YOU'RE HOTWIRED FOR AN INSTANT MIGRAINE. GET THE PICTURE?

WE'VE ALSO INTRODUCED A COMPUTER VIRUS THAT WILL WIPE THOSE CHIPS CLEAN UNLESS IT GETS A CODED PASSWORD NOT TO.
YOU'LL HAVE TO ACCESS THAT PASSWORD ONCE EVERY 24 HOURS. THE WORD IS CHANGED DAILY. WE CONTROL THAT ACCESS. IS EVERYTHING CLEAR SO FAR?

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

GOOD. YOU GOT IT THE FIRST TIME.
YOU'RE GOING TO WORK FOR ME. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I WANT WHEN I WANT IT AND YOU'LL COMPLY.
YOU'RE PROBABLY THINKING RIGHT NOW OF WAYS AROUND THIS. EVEN IF YOU CAN, I WOULDN'T TRY IT.
THERE'S A FAIL-SAFE BACKUP IN PLACE. THEY WON'T ASK QUESTIONS, THEY WON'T PLAY NICE, THEY'LL JUST KILL YOU. WE CLEAR ON ALL THIS?
YES.
FINE. WELL, YOU GO ACCESS THE CODE WORDS NOW. YOU GOT FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE VIRUS STARTS CRISPING YOUR ELECTRONIC BRAIN.
SOONER OR LATER, THAT BOY'S GOING TO CIRCUMVENT ALL YOUR MENTAL SHACKLES, AMANDA.
WHAT WILL YOU DO THEN?
5

DEPENDS ON HOW THAT PROGRAM THAT ORACLE--AMY HERE--IS DEVELOPING, HOW'S IT COMING ALONG, MS. BEDDOES?
I'M NOT PROMISING ANY MIRACLES, MRS. WALLER. IN FACT, I'M NOT SURE IT CAN BE DONE AT ALL!
CARMICHAEL'S A SOCIOPATH, HAS NO SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG. YOU'RE ASKING FOR A PROGRAM THAT WOULD GIVE HIM THOSE PARAMETERS--BE AN ARTIFICIAL CONSCIENCE.
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S POSSIBLE.
GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT, AMY. IT'S NOT THE ONLY REASON I ASKED YOU TO JOIN US HERE, THOUGH.
NO?
AMY--ORACLE--I'VE BEEN RUNNING THE SUICIDE SQUAD FOR AWHILE. EVERY TIME WE GO OUT ON A MISSION, ODDS ARE SOME OF US WON'T BE COMING BACK.
THAT HAS TO INCLUDE ME. BUT IF I DON'T COME BACK, WHO RUNS THE SQUAD?
I THINK MAYBE YOU COULD DO THAT.

I...I...! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, MRS. WALLER.
DON'T. JUST THINK ABOUT IT. THE REST OF THE SQUAD WON'T MEET YOU--THEY'LL KNOW YOU ONLY AS ORACLE.
JUST CONSIDER IT, OKAY?
OH, I'LL DO AT LEAST THAT, MRS. WALLER!
AMANDA, ARE YOU SERIOUS?
OH, YEAH.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS AMY BEDDOES?
SIMON, I DON'T EVEN KNOW SHE IS AMY BEDDOES. THAT WAS PART OF THE DEAL--ACCEPT HER IDENTITY AS IS. WE PRY AND SHE'S GONE. VERY PRIVATE GIRL, OUR ORACLE.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER PART OF THE DEAL I MADE WITH HER?
YOU MEAN TRYING TO FIND A WAY FOR HER TO WALK AGAIN?

I'M NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC. THE TECHNOLOGY THAT LET RAVAN WALK IN SPITE OF A BROKEN BACK WON'T WORK WITH HER. PART OF HER SPINE IS ACTUALLY MISSING AND THERE'S BEEN EXTENSIVE NEUROLOGICAL DAMAGE.
DO WHAT YOU CAN. WHAT'S THE PROGRESS ON MARI AND COUNT VERTIGO?
"VIXEN IS IMPROVING. WHAT SHE NEEDS NOW MOSTLY IS SLEEP."

YOU CAN GO IN, SIR, IF YOU WANT.
"COUNT VERTIGO IS DETOXIFIED. AT LEAST, HIS BODY IS RELATIVELY HEALTHY. I MAKE NO CLAIMS, HOWEVER, FOR HIS STATE OF MIND."
LAWTON. A MOMENT.
YEAH?
I MAY HAVE A...BOON TO ASK OF YOU.

YEAH?
FORGIVE ME. THIS IS... DIFFICULT FOR ME.
I'VE BEEN TOLD MY MIND, RECENTLY, HAS BEEN... ENSLAVED BY OTHERS, SUCH AS POISON IVY, THROUGH CHEMICAL MEANS. MY SOUL HAS NOT BEEN MY OWN.
GOT
THE BIPOLAR IMBALANCE WITHIN ME, LEADING TO MY MANIC-DEPRESSIVE STATE, HOLDS ME IN THRALL EVEN WITHOUT THE INTERFERENCE OF IVY OR THE OTHERS.
MY LIFE IS ONEROUS TO ME, BUT I HAVE NO MEANS WITH WHICH TO END IT! ALL POSSIBLE MEANS WITH WHICH I MIGHT DO SO HAVE BEEN DENIED TO ME BY DR. LAGRIEVE -- GAME YOU.
AND?
IF I ASKED YOU, WOULD YOU PUT A BULLET IN MY BRAIN?
OH YEAH.
SO BE DAMNED SURE THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY WANT BEFORE YOU REALLY ASK ME TO DO IT.

OI! LAWTON! I GOT A NIT T'PICK WITH YOU!
YEAH?
LAST THING I REMEMBER IS HAVING A JAW WITH YOU AND THEN -- BAM! -- IT'S LIGHTS OUT AND THE NEXT THING I KNOW, I WAKE UP AND I'M FIGHTING FOR MY LIFE AGAINST A HORDE OF ZOMBIES IN THE BLEEDIN' QURAQI DESERT!
SO?
SO, MATE, YOU COLD-COCKED ME ON THE BACK OF MY BLEEDIN' HEAD, DIN'T YOU?
OH YEAH.
YOU ADMIT IT?! WHY THE BLOODY HELL DIDSER DO IT?
BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE YOU.
STRENTH, NO ONE HERE MUCH LIKES ME. BUT EVEN THE BLOODY WALL DON'T DELIBERATELY TRY TO GET ME KILLED.
YOU LOST MY GUIT.
11

OI! BLOODY HELL! WHEN YOU GONNA GIVE THAT LOT A REST, EH? SOONER OR LATER, IT'S BOUND TO TURN UP...
IT HAS TURNED UP!
WELL, THERE YOU GO, MATIE...!
IT'S IN MARSEILLE. SOMEBODY ELSE IS USING IT.
BANG.
FACE IT, GEORGE -- IT'S NO GOOD TRYING TO BE NICE TO A LOONEY.
I REALLY THINK I'M JUST GONNER HAVE TO KILL HIM.
SO YOU'RE DETERMINED TO STAY ON WITH THE SQUAD, EVE.
I TAKE IT THIS IS CONNECTED WITH THE ENCHANTRESS'S PERSONALITY RE-EMERGING AND TAKING YOU OVER.
DR. LAGRIEVE IS GOING TO RUN SOME TESTS ALTHOUGH I'M CERTAIN THE PROBLEM IS METAPHYSICAL RATHER THAN PHYSICAL.
THAT EXPLAINS HANGING OUT AT IMHS -- BUT WHY GET MIXED UP IN THE SQUAD AGAIN?
12

KIND OF A DEAL I'VE STRUCK WITH AMANDA, TOM--I'LL WATCH HER DEMONS IF SHE WATCHES MINE.
HUH. YOU GOT THE SHORT END ON THAT ONE.
LOOK, I WON'T WORK FOR WALLER AGAIN, BUT...I'LL WORK WITH YOU. ANY TIME YOU NEED ME, YOU JUST CALL, OKAY?
DEAR TOM!
PECK!
AHHH...YOU SHOULDN'T DO THAT UNLESS YOU REALLY MEAN IT, OKAY?
OKAY

MARSEILLE, FRANCE. 36 HOURS LATER.
HOTEL
ALLO, DEADSHOT.

EDUARD.
SO YOU GOT MY TELEGRAM, SON.

I GOT IT.
WHO'S THE MOOK WHO COPPED MY SUIT? WHERE CAN I FIND HIM?

THE "MOOK" IS MARC PILAR, A BAGGAGE HANDLER AT ORLY AIRPORT IN PARIS. A NOTHING AT THE FRINGE OF THE GANGS. PILFERED FROM LUGGAGE ON A REGULAR BASIS, WHICH IS HOW HE FOUND YOUR "SUIT."

HE WISHES TO MAKE FOR HIMSELF A "NAME" AS AN ASSASSIN. HIS METHODS, I CONFESS, I FIND RATHER EXTREME.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW, BUT I KNOW THAT TONIGHT HE WILL BE ON THE DOCKS. I CAN GIVE YOU THE LOCATION.

WHAT'S YOUR PERCENTAGE IN ALL THIS?

HIS SHOOTINGS CREATE UNREST BETWEEN THE GANGS AND INFRINGES ON MY PROVINCE.
BETTER HE DIES AND SINCE IT IS YOUR NAME AND SUIT HE STEALS, IT IS BETTER YOU KILL HIM, EH?
I'LL KILL HIM.
BIEN. I'LL RETURN WHEN I HAVE THE EXACT PLACE AND TIME, EH?
-BOUL'A RIE-
<NOW WHERE TO, BOGS?>
<NOW I SEEK OUT MY NEW YOUNG FRIEND, MARC PILAR, AND TELL HIM THAT THE AMERICAN HAS COME TO MARSEILLE TO KILL HIM. THEN I TELL HIM WHEN AND WHERE THE AMERICAN CAN BE FOUND.>
<AND THEN WE WILL TAKE THE WAGERS ON WHO WILL DIE—THE AMERICAN OR THE FRENCHMAN.>
16

<IT IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.>
<MY MONEY IS ON THE AMERICAN. HE HAS THE EXPERIENCE AND THE GREATER SKILL.>
<I HAVE BEEN TRAINING THE BOY FOR THIS OCCASION. HE WILL DO WELL. AND THERE IS SOMETHING YOU HAVE NOT CONSIDERED.>
<YOU HAVE NOT CONSIDERED THE PSYCHOLOGY INVOLVED — AS HAVE I.>
BLAM BLAM BLAM!
13

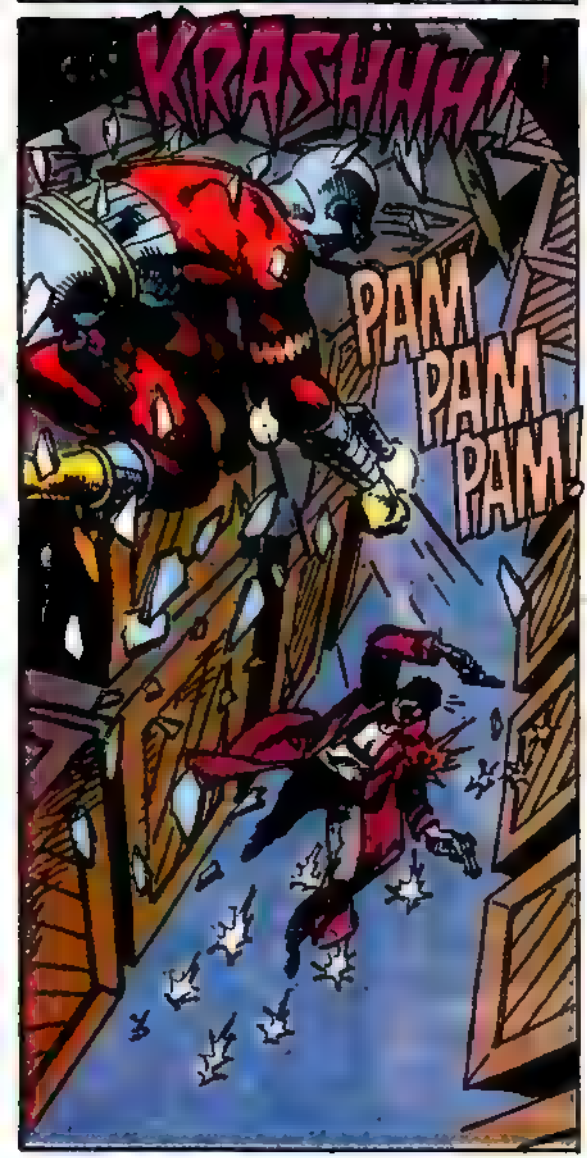
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

<FOOL! WHY DIDN'T THE AMERICAN *SHOOT?* HE HAD HIS MAN DEAD TO RIGHTS!>

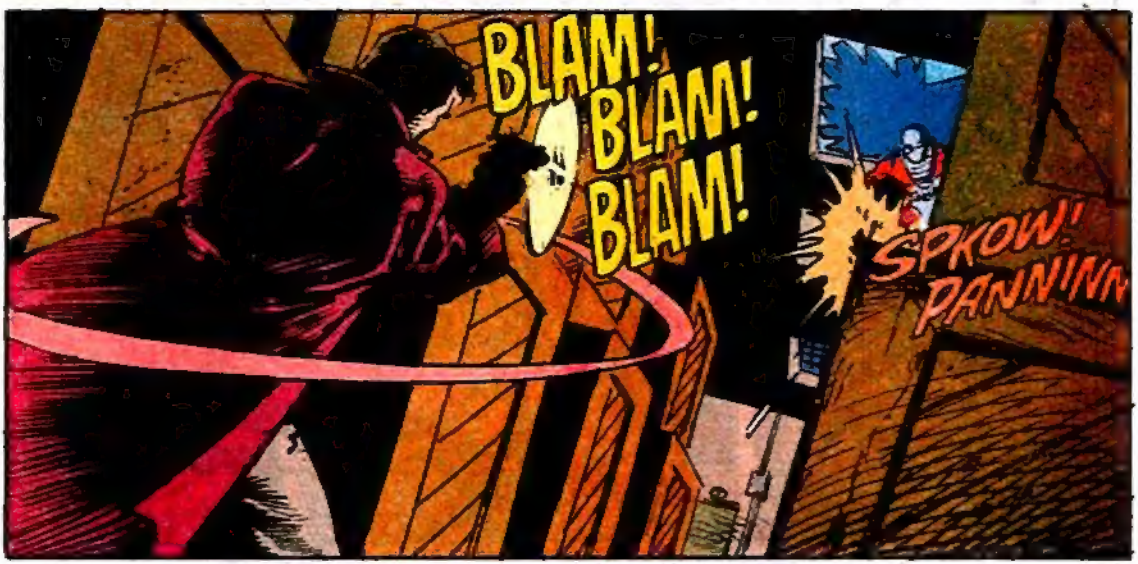
<LAWTON WOULD BE SHOOTING *HIMSELF*. HE WOULD BE KILLING THE PART OF HIMSELF WITH WHICH HE MOST *IDENTIFIES*.>

<A DEATH WISH IS *ONE* THING, BUT THIS WOULD BE KILLING HIS *SOUL*. THAT IS THE *PSYCHOLOGY* OF THE MATTER-- AND WHY LAWTON *MUST* LOSE.>

BAM!
BAM!
BAM!


KRASHHH!
PAM
PAM
PAM!

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!


BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
SPKOW! PANNINN

HA HA HA HA! GIVE IT UP, AMERICAIN! YOU CANNOT KILL ME! YOU KNOW YOU CANNOT!
FOR I AM YOU, NON?

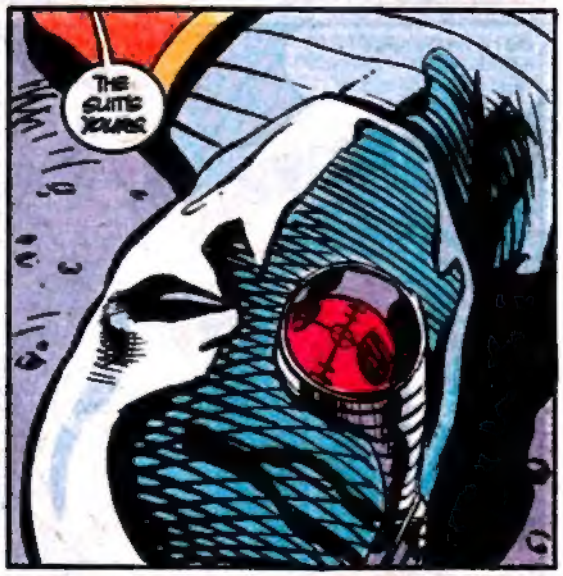
COME, DYING IS EASY. IT IS LIVING THAT IS DIFFICULT-- TOO DIFFICULT FOR YOU, YES?

I AM DEADSHOT! YOU CAN SHOOT AT ME, BUT YOU CANNOT BRING YOURSELF TO KILL ME. BUT I WILL KILL YOU!

LET'S GET IT OVER--
EH?

BLAM

YOU WIN, PAL.


THE SUITS YOURS.

TERRAIN PRIVÉ
NEXT—THE RETURN OF DR. LIGHT?

SUICIDE NOTES

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L-6239

Dear Dan,

I was very surprised to see Ravan killed. Not disappointed, as he wasn't really a favorite of mine...let's face it, he was a bit one-track. All he ever did was moan about preventing the Kali-Yuga and run around trying to kill Kobra. After a few times that got a little tiresome, so his departure wasn't all that upsetting. Still, as I said, I was surprised to see a member of the Squad die so soon after all the recent changes. It's that unpredictability that makes this book so refreshing. It is also reassuring that we know when a character dies, he stays dead, unlike in that other book (from the other company) where people are always dying, only to be revived a few issues later (oh, hang on, that's about half the books that the other company puts out....).

And speaking of death and dying, if Ray Palmer IS dead, then I won't be very happy...Oh, but come off it. If Ray Palmer's dead, I'm Chuck Berry.

Rock and Roll. (Er...Ray? Ray?)

Rol Hirst
Huddersfield, W. Yorks
England

Hey, man, we'd never bring characters back from the dead. We're much too, uh,...CLASSY for that sort of hogwash!

*****

Dudes,

SUICIDE SQUAD #47. Not a bad issue. I was surprised to see Ravan kick the bucket. He's one of those characters you see but don't really think or care about. I'm pretty sure the DC Universe won't be thrust into another great crisis because of it, though, (speaking of which, wouldn't it be so cool if the Anti-Monitor joined the Squad?)

The new Atom seems interesting. On the one hand, he doesn't quite seem to have the experience of Ray Palmer. On the other, he also isn't the do-gooder Boy Scout Palmer was. From what he said in issue #45, he's had dealings with the league before. Could he be Mark Shaw in another of a long chain of alter-egos after Star-Tsar, Privateer, and Manhunter? Or even better, how about Rick Flag? Tell us soon.

As for new members, I have only one suggestion: FIRESTORM! I WANT FIRESTORM! GIVE ME FIRESTORM!

Later,
Dr. Dis

No plans for the return of ol' Flame-top, Doc, but the Anti-Monitor will be signing on as Captain Boomerang's personal valet. Just kiddin'. As for Mark Shaw, check out #53.

*****

Dear Squad dudes,

Issue #47. To say I liked this issue would be a serious understatement. It was great. Would like to have seen more of Ravan vs. Cobra but, well...let's not argue over little things. I felt bad for Ravan not fulfilling his goals. He wasn't your everyday, run-of-the-mill killing machine. You can see those guys anytime you walk into the comic book store. This guy believed in killing as a religious belief. I'll miss him. Faxman, er...Atom (I keep messing that up) seemed reasonably effective. By the way, in reference to all that stuff in the letters page, let's face it, until Fax...(oops) Atom takes off his mask, people will believe Ray Palmer lives—despite the fact that our good friend Dan assures us that he's dead. (I, for one, have complete faith, by the way. How about confirmation from John and Kim?) Tiger vs. Judith— loved it! Would like to have seen more, but I understood the happenings. I hope the guy mellows a bit. Give Vertigo a break, PLEASE. By the way, who fled? Vertigo or Bronze Tiger? Until Rick Flag reappears as a radioactive mutant, Suicide Squad forever.

Barry Burke

Ivy *fled, Barry.*

*****

Dear Dan,

Even with the debacle the Crisis made of DC continuity, I am surprised by how tight the Squad's continuity really is. The original Squad has not been forgotten, nor have past happenings of the current Squad's. The problem of the late Thinker's helmet has been plaguing both the Suicide Squad and Firestorm's defunct title since the Doom Patrol/Suicide Squad's special way back when. Now the "new" Thinker, Cliff Carmichael, rolls into the Suicide Squad with intentions of killing our Oracle, Barbara Gordon. This long-running, two-title plot has been all too long coming to a conclusion, and now that it is, I can't wait for it.

Another aspect of issue #48's strong continuity was the two-page cliffhanger at the end of the book. Besides being *very* creepy, the mention (and possible future appearance) of General J.E.B. Stuart intrigued me. A character who had a hand or two in the origination of Task Force X and a past as long as his shows another unforgotten part in the long history of the Squad. I find myself extremely curious on the part of the Mohawked "zombie" weirdo. My first idea was—is it part of the missing Monster Squad? But, no. Project "M" never had someone that looked like that. So, what is the connection between J.E.B. Stuart and the kidnapping of his godson? Does it have something to do with the General's old Haunted Tank?

Sir Jon Johnson
64 Indian Hill Avenue
Portland, CT 06480

Disappointing, Sir Jon. I thought for sure that a continuity maven like you would have picked out the undead Mindbaggler in a second! Maybe next time.

*****

Dear Suicidal Tendencies,

Amanda, helmets just do not go well with your outfit! Try a hat!

Keep Oracle as a regular member of this cast. This makes a better presentation of Barbara Gordon as a heroine than she ever did as Batgirl. And the new Thinker makes a perfect arch-villain for her!

Mark Phillips
P.O. Box 1927
Johnson City, TN 37605

Thanks, Mark. Keep in touch.

*****

Dear Dan, John, Kim, Geof, Todd, and Tom:

I'd like to begin this letter by commending Steve Lightle on his exquisite cover for SUICIDE SQUAD #48. The Joker, Barbara (almost Batgirl) and the computer graphics were beautiful, and reminded me of THE KILLING JOKE without failing to show that that was then and this was now. Why not let Steve become SUICIDE SQUAD'S regular cover artist, as Brian Bolland, Simon Bisley, and Brendan McCarthy are for, respectively, ANIMAL MAN, DOOM PATROL and SHADE?

"In Control" as a title was accurate until page 20, when something out of control occurred: who was that zombie-ish being who snatched Ricky Kane? I doubt that the New Thinker was behind him: the fact that Mr. Kane told his wife to call General J.E.B. Stuart, Rick Flag's godfather, brought the Colonel to mind (even in spite of Marge's "theys")...but the Colonel died in SUICIDE SQUAD #26 and went to his reward, I've been told, in CAPTAIN ATOM. But the trousers looked right for Flag and that grimness in the creature's close-up (page 22, panel 3) was Flag-like, too. While I'm not in control of this development, I suspect that John Ostrander and Kim Yale are, so I'll return to what I could fathom.

People *in* control, I think, don't have to say that they are. In #48, Simon LaGrieve was the person most in control, and his attitude toward Amanda Waller reflected the wisdom he acquired in FIRESTORM (bring that series back!): he could learn from her without himself "crossing the line," and I suspect that if Count Vertigo's cold turkey had been much colder, he would have intervened. Some expiation, after all, can go too far. The others we saw were not in control consistently, save for the New Thinker, and the New Thinker is "a sociopath with no sense of right or wrong." His control makes sense only to him (and possibly to Doreen Day, wherever she is, and Ron Raymond, wherever he is).

Vertigo chose to suffer. Amanda did, too, in her recent past; in her present, she echoed uncomfortably Rick Flag's experience in the DOOM PATROL/SUICIDE SQUAD SPECIAL: Flag could have turned into Steve Dayton, but never redonned the helmet; Amanda could have become Earth's own Marij'n (that's a L.E.G.I.O.N. plug, natch—the Wall, like Mrs. Bek, is slimmer than she was), but smashed the helmet instead. She found what she needed, but at a cost. As for Barbara Gordon: she saw a therapist, and she recognized that she needed help emotionally *and* physically. But Babs still clung to the old secret identity line (which, given the end of Batgirl's career in 1987, was unnecessary); with a sociopath after her, she did not ask for help from Simon LaGrieve (who could have sent Firehawk), as one might expect. While Cliff sought and Werner suffered and Amanda smashed, Babs steeled herself. That's as much "an act" as the behavior of "perky, plucky Barbara Gordon" with the Commissioner, and against Cliff, it won't help much, unless Hugo Hammer, who'll also never walk again, turns up and gives his cousin a bad case of the guilts.

John and Kim were very good this month; so was Geof Isherwood. He didn't draw like Steve Lightle, but he proved that versatility was its own reward: look at the talking-heads scenes with Simon and Amanda; the dreams of Barbara Gordon; and the computer program (pages 13-16—a tour de force); then look at the monster in the suburbs...Geof can do a great deal in this most inexpensive of formats, ranging from the gritty he's exhibited in past issues to the algorhythmic in this tale. It didn't hurt that Tom McCraw—apparently when Gafford goes, McCraw moves in—filled in the colors. His greens were wonderful, as were the spurting red of the knife massacre (page 6), the blue of the superimposed Batgirl (page 10), and the cyberpunk illumination of the computer duel.

Guys, it's good to be back in the U.S.A. with the Squad and to see that John and Kim haven't forgotten what John did in the final years of FIRESTORM. Now, if you can only get the Fire Elemental back from his black hole...

Very truly yours,
Charles J. Sperling
37-15 Parsons Boulevard, Apt. 4-C
Flushing, NY 11354-5814

P.S. Tell your ad department that "The Seduction of Starman, " if running in #30-34, will be a "soul-searching *five-part* saga."

No June Moone request this month!

Thanks for writing, Charles.

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

I guess that I can handle the return of Batgirl...as long as she doesn't move her legs, that is.

I continue to love SUICIDE SQUAD, especially when you put such kick-butt Lightle covers on.

Is it just me or does that rotting guest star we saw this issue bear a remarkable resemblance to Mindboggler? If she's coming back from the dead (even as the undead), I'll be severely disappointed.

General Stuart? General J.E.B. Stuart? Isn't that the same guy with that haunted tank?

Sincerely yours,
David S. Gallacher
4151 Monarch Way
Salt Lake City, UT 84124

Well, I hope you weren't too disappointed, David, since that rotting Mindboggler wasn't the only zombie in #50. I know I'm going to regret this, but does anyone want to take a crack at identifying all the undead guest stars in #50?

* * * * *

Editor:

Kill Boomerbutt. Let Peacemaker join the Squad. Don't kill Deadshot. Keep away from silly, gaudy costumes. Keep up the good work. Ciao.

Nister Arcane
16 Ninth Street
Orange Grove
Johannesberg 2192
South Africa

How can we keep away from silly costumes and work with Peacemaker at the same time? Talk about funny headgear...

Thanks for writing, Mr. Arcane.

* * * * *

NEXT ISSUE: The Squad is in place, but in typical Squad fashion, nothing goes quite right. And to hurt them worse, where do you think the bad guys will aim? Think!

—The mysterious Dan Raspler

NEXT ISSUE:

A DOCTOR LIGHT-HEARTED TALE!